

News

Macomb County
Office of Public Affairs



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[Editors note: This package includes general news and business briefs]

News Nuggets – Macomb County News Briefs

Board approves purchase of new Marine Division boat

Macomb County Sheriff Mark A. Hackel received the go-ahead Wednesday, April 12, to buy and equip a 2006 Fountain Patrol Boat for the Marine Division.

The Board of Commissioners approved the sheriff to spend up to \$103,664 from the 2005 Homeland Security Grant Program to replace the aging lake patrol vessels already in use which are not equipped for night or high-speed patrols.

The Sheriff's Office is responsible for enforcing Michigan marine laws within Macomb County. That includes patrols on 85 square miles of Lake St. Clair, southwest from the St. Clair County border to north of the Wayne County boarder, and patrols on 35 miles of shoreline and 57 miles of rivers.

The Marine Division also is responsible for assisting in Homeland Security patrols, and takes requests from U.S. Border Patrol and the U.S. Coast Guard to participate in other operations such as search-and-rescue missions.

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Board approves policy limiting use of county resources for lobbying

The Macomb County Board of Commissioners voted Wednesday, April 12, to enact a policy that will prohibits the use of county resources for lobbying.

The policy covers all Macomb County boards, commissions and employees. It prohibits the use of county facilities, resources or property for any purpose other than those set by constitution, laws or regulations.

Under this new policy, anyone wishing to engage in lobbying with county resources must first obtain permission from the Macomb County Board of Commissioners. Any board, commission or employee violating this new policy will be receive discipline appropriate for the infraction.

Macomb County to add three economic development specialists

The Macomb County Board of Commissioners approved hiring three new economic development specialists whose job will be to attract new business and jobs for the county.

The County Board voted on Wednesday, April 12, to add the new positions for the Department of Planning & Economic Development contingent upon identifying the \$427,000 needed to cover salaries, benefits and expenses.

Macomb County now has only one full-time business recruiter to compete against much stronger efforts in neighboring counties. Oakland County has an eight-person economic development staff and St. Clair County, with half of Macomb's population has five.

Oakland County Executive L. Brooks Patterson says that each of his economic development specialists brings in about \$40 million worth of investment and \$1 million in tax revenues per year.

Board receives \$200,000 EPA brownfield assessment grant

The Macomb County Board of Commissioners voted Wednesday, April 12, to receive \$200,000 from the Environmental Protection Agency for the county's Brownfield Redevelopment Program.

The grant money will be used to assess potential brownfield sites in Macomb County and produce an inventory of properties. The program will include environmental assessments of the sites and begin the process for planning their redevelopment.

The money also will go toward publicizing redevelopment incentives for brownfield sites and initiating a clean-up plan for properties that have redevelopment potential.

Brownfield properties are those that may have contamination issues making them unattractive to developers due to costs associated with cleanup. They are often located in older urban areas or areas abandoned by the property owners.

Macomb County renews agreement with MI-SBTDC

Macomb County is renewing its agreement to serve as the Region 10 office of the Michigan Small Business & Technology Development Center (SBTDC). The Macomb office provides training and services that promote small businesses in Macomb and St. Clair counties.

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The County Board on Wednesday, April 12, approved a request from the Macomb County Department of Planning & Economic Development to continue working with the SBTDC, based at Grand Valley State University.

The SBTDC provides low or no cost training in addition to free, confidential assistance in all areas of small business planning and management. Last year, the SBTDC assisted 776 new or expanding businesses retain 1,930 jobs. Those businesses secured more than \$216 million in loans and made over \$96 million in new investments.

The SBTDC program is a cooperative effort among the local chambers of commerce, Macomb Community College, the U.S. Small Business Administration and Macomb County. In operation for 22 years, this award-winning program is responsible for the development and retention of small businesses on a countywide basis.

Macomb County Library will close on holidays

The Macomb County Library now will be closed for all county holidays including Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Presidents' Day, Columbus Day, general election day (observed in even numbered years), Veterans' Day and the day after Thanksgiving.

Additional cuts approved include sharing dedicated licenses amongst several employees, reducing energy costs by turning off all of the library's computers and such at the end of each day and removing six telephones.

The cuts are part of a plan to save about \$45,000 in operating costs at the library. These cuts are in addition to the 3 percent, across-the-board cuts approved by the Board of Commissioners earlier this year.

Board appoints members to Building Authority, Mental Health Board

The Macomb County Board of Commissioners voted Wednesday, April 12, to appoint Robert G. Soulliere of St. Clair Shores to a vacancy on the Macomb County Building Authority and Patricia Bill of Warren to the Mental Health Services Board.

The Building Authority vacancy was created with the resignation of County Commissioner James McCarthy (D-Sterling Heights), who withdrew when he was appointed in February to the Board of Commissioners. Soulliere, who has served on the St. Clair Shores City Council, Police & Fire Pension Board and Parks & Recreation Board, will serve on the county Building Authority until Dec. 31, 2007.

Bill, who has served on the Mental Health Board since 1994, was reappointed to fill the unexpired term of County Commissioner Susan Doherty (D-Warren), who resigned. This appointment for Bill expires on March 31, 2007.

About Macomb County

Macomb County is an enriching community in Southeastern Michigan that has one of the state's fastest rates of growth. Its 834,000 residents make it Michigan's third-largest county, with direct access to Lake St. Clair and Anchor Bay, and a host of cultural and entertainment options. Its highly skilled workforce and investment in new and expanding businesses make it open to enterprise. Active civic leadership translates into balanced budgets and Michigan's second-lowest tax rate. An increasingly diverse population and high quality of life make Macomb County accessible to all.

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